COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COUNTY CONTINUES TO COMBAT MOSQUITOES FROM THE AIR

Helicopter Being Used to Apply Larvicide to Local Wetlands

The County Vector Control program is initiating its second proactive, aerial larvicide application to local wetlands in an effort to reduce the mosquito population and the risk for West Nile virus.

Using a helicopter to apply the mosquito larvicide, the Vector Control staff is treating 27 hard-to-reach, heavily vegetated habitats known to be mosquito-breeding sites. In all, the helicopter will apply the larvicide to 566 acres of wetlands in the county. Last year, the aerial applications reduced the mosquito population by 90% in the treated areas.

"It's important to eliminate mosquito-breeding sites and control mosquitoes in the larval stage so they don't turn into biting adults that can transmit diseases, such as West Nile virus," said Gary Erbeck, director of the County Department of Environmental Health.

The larvicide, which is ground corncob granules containing *Bacillus sphaericus* and *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti),* is a naturally occurring bacteria registered by the Environmental Protection Agency. Designed to dissolve in water, the larvicide kills developing mosquito larvae for up to four weeks. Laboratory tests and local field trials have shown the larvicide granules do not have an adverse effect on fish, wildlife, humans, or the environment.

The Vector Control program will continue to conduct monthly aerial applications to the key area wetlands for the entire mosquito season.

County residents can help reduce the mosquito population by eliminating standing water around their homes, which are prime breeding areas for mosquitoes. Residents can also report mosquito-breeding areas, dead birds, and poorly maintained green swimming pools to the Vector Control program.

For more information, visit www.SDFightTheBite.com or call 1-888-551-INFO (4636).

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